

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
EA-10 FRB-03 INR-07 IO-13 NEA-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06
OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGRE-00
OMB-01 SS-15 OIC-02 NSC-05 STR-06 L-03 /118 W
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R 171544Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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USOECD

PASS TREASURY FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRILL

E.O.11652: NA
TAGS: EGEN OECD
SUBJECT: INTERFUTURES: JAN 9-10 HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS
MEETING

1. SUMMARY: JAN 9-10 EXPERTS' MEETING MARKED MOST SUB-
STANTIVE MULTILATERAL DISCUSSION OF INTERFUTURES WORK TO
DATE AND FIRST OCCASION ON WHICH FRENCH AND, MOST IMPOR-
TANTLY JAPANESE, HAVE GIVEN CONCRETE INDICATIONS OF WHAT
THEY EXPECT OF THE PROJECT. VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THESE
KEY DELEGATIONS AGREE LARGELY WITH THE POINTS WE HAVE
BEEN MAKING TO LESOURNE AND HIS TEAM OVER THE LAST FEW
MONTHS, AND LESOURNE INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE FULLY
REFLECTED IN REVISED PAPERS TO BE PRESENTED TO MID-
FEBRUARY STEERING COMMITTEE. EXPERTS VOICED CONCERN
OVER WHETHER INTERFUTURES TEAM WOULD BE ABLE TO PRODUCE
ADEQUATE DOCUMENTATION TO ATTRACT SENIOR OFFICIALS TO
A MAY OR JUNE MEETING AND STIMULATE A USEFUL DISCUS-
SION. PROCEDURAL UPSHOT OF MEETING WAS A RECOMMENDA-
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TION THAT INTERFUTURES TEAM CONTINUE TO PREPARE FOR A
MAY/JUNE SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING BUT WITH A PRECISE
CUT OFF DATE (AROUND MAY 1) BY WHICH PLANS FOR SUCH A
MEETING WILL BE CANCELLED IF PREPARATIONS ARE JUDGED
INADEQUATE. END SUMMARY.

2. A RESTRICTED GROUP OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS MET JAN 9-

10 TO DISCUSS FORM AND CONTENT OF FINAL YEAR OF INTER-FUTURES WORK ON LONG-TERM POLICY ISSUES IN PREPARATION FOR FULL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MID-FEBRUARY. PARTICIPANTS WERE US (ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRILL AND DEPT. ASSISTANT SECY. JUNZ OF TREASURY), FRANCE (FOREIGN OFFICE PLANNING CHIEF DE MONTBRIAL AND MIGNOT OF THE "PLAN"), BELGIUM (PLANNING DIRECTOR MALDAGUE), JAPAN (ECONOMIC PLANNING AGENCY COUNSELOR TANAKA), ITALY (DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING LANDRISCINA) AND NORWAY (DIRECTOR OF STATISTICS AUKRUST).

3. MAIN ISSUES PUT BEFORE MEETING WERE

A) WHETHER AN AD HOC SENIOR POLICY LEVEL MEETING SHOULD BE HELD IN MAY OR JUNE TO DISCUSS POLICY ISSUES RAISED BY INTERFUTURES WORK, AS PROPOSED BY PROJECT TEAM, AND

B) WHAT SHOULD BE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF PAPERS PREPARED FOR SUCH A DISCUSSION.

MEETING WAS CHARACTERIZED BY MOST OUTSPOKEN PERFORMANCE TO DATE BY JAPANESE AND FRENCH REPS, BOTH OF WHOM INDICATED DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY THAT THEY SHARE US CONCERN OVER WHETHER INTERFUTURES TEAM WILL BE ABLE IN THE TIME AVAILABLE TO PRODUCE ADEQUATE DOCUMENTATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO ATTRACT SENIOR POLICY OFFICIALS TO A MEETING AND STIMULATE A USEFUL DISCUSSION. ONLY ITALIAN REP WAS ABLE CATEGORICALLY TO SUPPORT CONCEPT OF A MAY/JUNE MEETING IN THE ABSENCE OF FURTHER SIGNS OF ADEQUATE PREPARATION.

4. MAIN SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS RAISED DURING MEETING WERE:

--INAPPROPRIATENESS OF OVERALL "GEOPOLITICAL" SCENARIOS PRESENTED IN CHAPTER 20 AS UNIFYING FRAMEWORK FOR INTERFUTURES WORK;

--ABSENCE OF ANY OTHER UNIFYING THEME TO DISTINGUISH INTERFUTURES WORK FROM OTHER SIMILAR STUDIES UNDERWAY IN OECD AND ELSEWHERE;

--INSUFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF SCENARIOS FOR POSSIBLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN AND AMONG OECD COUNTRIES (A POINT STRESSED PARTICULARLY BY JAPAN);

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--LACK OF QUANTITATIVE BACK-UP FOR INTERFUTURES
WORK;

--LACK OF ATTENTION IN NORTH/SOUTH SECTION TO RE-
SPONSIBILITIES OF LDCS THEMSELVES TO PURSUE RATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES (POINT STRESSED BY US).

ALL DELS NOTED THAT LATE PRODUCTION OF KEY BACKGROUND
PAPERS ON TRADE, RAW MATERIALS AND NORTH/SOUTH RELA-
TIONS AS WELL AS THE ABSENCE THUS FAR OF AN INDICATION
OF A QUANTITATIVE FRAMEWORK MADE IT DIFFICULT TO
DISCUSS CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF AN ISSUE PAPER FOR A
SENIOR POLICY MEETING.

5. IN PERHAPS THE MAJOR POSITIVE RESULT OF THE MEETING
INTERFUTURES DIRECTOR LESOURNE INDICATED AGREEMENT THAT
SCENARIOS DEVELOPED IN CHAPTER 20 SHOULD BE VIEWED ES-
SENTIALLY AS A RESEARCH TOOL AND WOULD NOT FIGURE PROM-
INENTLY IN PAPERS PRESENTED TO A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING. HE
ALSO TOOK THE OTHER SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE POINTS NOTED
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ABOVE AND INDICATED THT THEY WOULD BE REFLECTED IN A REVISED OUTLINE PAPER TO BE PRESENTED TO FEBRUARY STEERING COMMITTEE. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE UNIFYING THEMES AND A NARROWED LIST OF SPECIFIC ISSUES TO BE HIGH-LIGHTED FOR SENIOR POLICY MEETING, LESOURNE AGREED TO PRESENT ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES, BASED ON THIS DISCUSSION, TO NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING. LESOURNE AGREED THAT SENIOR POLICY MEETING SHOULD NOT BE HELD UNLESS ADEQUATELY PREPARED BUT VOICED CONFIDENCE THAT TEAM COULD COME UP WITH WELL-STRUCTURED MATERIAL IN ADVANCE OF A MAY/JUNE MEETING. HOWEVER SOME DELEGATES, ESPECIALLY JAPAN (TANAKA) WERE SKEPTICAL THAT CRISP, INTERESTING MAIN ISSUES PAPER COULD BE PREPARED ON BASIS OF MATERIAL CIRCULATED SO FAR.

6. UPSHOT OF EXPERTS' DISCUSSION WAS AGREEMENT TO A US PROPOSAL THAT INTERFUTURES TEAM CONTINUE TO PREPARE FOR A MAY/JUNE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BUT WITH A PRECISE CUT-OFF DATE (AROUND MAY 1) BY WHICH PLANS FOR THE MEETING WILL BE CANCELLED IF PREPARATIONS ARE JUDGED NOT TO BE ADEQUATE. (LESOURNE DID NOT RESPOND TO FURTHER US POINT THAT PRESENT PLANS FOR TWO HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS (THE SECOND IN THE FALL) SHOULD BE REDUCED TO ONE IF THE FIRST IS NOT HELD BY JUNE). IT WAS AGREED THAT A FURTHER STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SHOULD BE HELD AROUND MAY 1 TO JUDGE THE ADEQUACY OF PREPARATIONS AND DECIDE WHETHER HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WILL BE HELD. EXPERTS AND LESOURNE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT FEBRUARY STEERING COMMITTEE TAKE NO DEFINITIVE DECISION ON THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING.
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